BRANCH LIBRARIES TO BE ABOLISHED IN TACOMA JAN. 1

As the result of the cut made by the city council in the 1917 library budget, the Tacoma library board Friday solved its retrenchment problem by unanimously voting to close both the South Tacoma and McKinley Hill branches for one year beginning Jan. 1.

The board decided to operate only the main building at 12th and Tacoma av., such scattered delivery stations in the outlying districts as are willing to circulate books at their own expense, and the station in Rhodes Brothers' store.

Store to Pay $1,000

The Rhodes Brothers' station, however, will be financed entirely at the store's expense, $1,000 having been promised for its maintenance, the library board to continue complete control.

The cut made by the city council amounted to 18 per cent.

Since October the board has had a committee, consisting of Bishop F. W. Keator, Superintendent of Schools W. F. Geiger and Harry E. O'Neil, at work studying various plans for retrenchment.

The action taken Friday was on the recommendation of the committee.

Call In U. W. Expert

The committee made a detailed cost analysis of six alternative plans for 1917, assisted by Prof. W. E. Henry, director of the University of Washington library and library school, who was called in at the suggestion of Librarian Kaiser and offered his services free in making a detailed survey.

As the result of his survey, Henry, in his report to the board, declared that none of the branches could be maintained even on part time schedule, and that no alternative was possible.

Compliments Library

He also declared that the Tacoma library has been rendering far more service than almost any other similar library in the country at a cost per person served and per volume circulated far below the average.

In other words, he concluded that the library was offering a degree of service to the public which was all out of proportion to the amount of funds provided by the people of the city for its maintenance.

The retrenchment plans will call for a nine per cent cut in the salary roll.

Heads to Come Off

The board set as the date for announcing which members of the library staff will be released.

The board agreed that only the most capable and efficient employes would be retained to serve the patrons of the main library.

The board's action means that the following outlying delivery stations will be retained, as they have agreed to keep the books circulated at no expense to the board:

Stations To Be Left

Fern Hill, at the Fern Hill post-office.

Garland, at Dunn's Grocery, 35th and Gunnison streets.

Proctor, at Benatt's Grocery, 37th and Proctor.

Rhodes Brothers.

Sixth Addition, at Dague Drug Co., South 38th and Yakima.

The Roosevelt, Larchmont and Center stations will be abolished.

Delegation Appears.

A delegation from the McKinley Hill branch appeared before the board before final action was taken and made a plea for the continuance of the library there.

They were told that the only possible way to continue would be for some store in the neighborhood to offer to distribute the books free of cost.

Librarian Kaiser announced that various economies had already been put into practice and that many more were under way.

A MISFORTUNE

The announcement that the branch Tacoma libraries are to be abolished has awakened some of us with a start.

We have received a jolt that will not let us fall off in a doze again for some time.

Certainly Tacoma folks are not feeling any sense of pride today in having the news go out to the rest of the country that the city is cutting out its libraries.

We have to be hit with a jolt like this to realize that our libraries are nearly, if not quite, as important as our schools in the healthy, intelligent progress of the city.

Perhaps our city fathers didn't realize what they were doing when they chopped such a hole in the vitals of the city. Perhaps they did their best in a difficult situation.

We might have no regrets if the library board had been extravagant, or if the institution had been developed out of proportion to the growth of the city.

But we have the word of an expert such as Prof. Henry of the University of Washington library, that the Tacoma library, with its branches, has been rendering far more service to the people, with less money to do it on, than any other similar library in the country.

The library board is not to blame for the present misfortune—for misfortune it is.

It is up to the people of South Tacoma and McKinley hill now—in fact it is up to all the people of the city—to create a sentiment so strong that it will be impossible, when the next budget is drawn, to leave our library stranded—a cripple.

With our books taken out of our reach, it is just like a neighborhood after our best friends have left it.

TELLS WHY LIBRARY CUT IS NECESSARY

Bishop Keator, President of Board, in Statement Points to Necessity of Retrenchment

That the Tacoma public library is giving better service than the funds at its disposal warrant and that retrenchment is an absolute necessity, are the outstanding features of a statement given out Saturday by Bishop Frederic W. Keator, president of the library board. Bishop Keator's statement includes a report made by Professor W. E. Henry of the State university library, who has made a careful study of conditions in Tacoma. The statement gives a full explanation of the reasons for the board's decision to eliminate the McKinley Hill and South Tacoma branch stations.

The statement follows:

We are at a most critical stage in the history of the Tacoma Public Library and the library board, believing that a public office is a public trust which should be reported on, wishes the citizens of Tacoma to understand the situation fully.

The library budget for 1917 allowed by the city council was 18% below that of 1916. For the five or six weeks since this became known to the board the librarian and the library staff have been making a thorough study of the 1917 retrenchment problem.

In reporting thus publicly on our study and conclusions we do not mean to direct attention to the fact that the library was cut far more, proportionately, than any other city department except the civil service board, without any apparent investigation on the part of the council of the quantity or quality of the work done by the library. It is merely our business to give the best service possible on the funds allowed us.

An efficiency survey of our work was the most natural and effective method of ascertaining the facts and the data required as the basis for solving our problem. Such a survey has been made by a special committee of the board, the librarian and the heads of departments. In addition, the librarian, Mr. Kaiser, suggested that an outside library efficiency expert be called in to give his candid opinion on the situation after an independent investigation, and the library board invited Professor W. E. Henry, director of the State University library and its library school, to make such an investigation.

This has been done and Professor Henry's report in full is given a little later.

The budget committee of the board considered eight alternative proposals for 1917 and made a cost analysis of each. They were:

1. Open the main library only.
2. Open main library and Rhodes station at Rhodes' expense.
3. Open main library and outlying delivery stations (without paying for service).
4. Open main library, Rhodes station at Rhodes' expense and stations (no pay).
5. Open main library, South Tacoma branch one-half schedule and Rhodes station at Rhodes' expense.
6. Open main library, McKinley Hill branch on one-half schedule, and Rhodes station at Rhodes' expense.
7. Open main library and South Tacoma branch half time.
8. Open main library and McKinley Hill branch half time.

A comparative statement of the cost of these various plans is given below, and it must be borne in mind that in addition to salaries, books, binding and periodicals, the expenses for the maintenance of the library and its ... es include light, water, fuel, ne, building repairs, furniture, ent repair and a great quantity nical, office and janitor sup-

Expense Estimates

1	$30,871
2	30,493
n 3	$1,533
Plan 4	31,582
Plan 5	32,614
Plan 6	32,034
Plan 7	32,754
Plan 8	32,024

The appropriation for the library for 1917 is $30,046.40. Additional income from fines, etc., may make the available funds as much as $31,300.

It was the opinion of the committee that the board should operate the main library efficiently, if possible, thus providing one central place where good library service would be rendered, and operate in addition only such agencies for book distribution as could be effectively managed with the remainder of the library fund.

From the data in the hands of the committee it was apparent that the board could not operate either of the branch libraries, even part time, during next year, and at the same time keep the main library open as at present.

It was then voted that the committee recommend to the library board that it adopt Plan 4, providing for the opening of the main library, the station at Rhodes Brothers at Rhodes Brothers' expense, and such of the delivery stations as can be operated without compensation to the proprietor of the store in which placed. This plan the library board adopted unanimously at its meeting Friday, November 24.

It seems fitting here to insert Professor Henry's report. Professor Henry was asked to give especial attention to the question of the proportion of the salary roll to the total expense of the library, the individual salaries paid, the quantity and quality of work done, and the principles of retrenchment to be applied:

Report, with recommendations, upon a brief investigation of the expenditure, equipment and service of the Tacoma Public Library:

I. FACTS.

1. Your total salaries are out of proportion to your total income as measured by the average of cities and libraries of approximately the same size distributed over the country.

2. Your individual salaries are not too high in any case and some of them are too low as measured by the service rendered or by the demands of living expenses.

3. Your expenditure for equipment, i. e. books, periodicals and binding, is below the average per cent expended by other similar libraries for this purpose.

4. Your circulation is larger than not only the average of similar cities, but in excess of most as measured by size of library, size of staff, or amount of total income.

5. Your equipment is deteriorating while the use of it is growing.

6. Your staff is rendering excellent service for the salaries paid and for the equipment provided.

7. Your city is not adequately paying for the service it is receiving and it is paying much less per capita for library purposes than is being paid in other cities with which it would be willing to be compared.

8. Of both your staff and your equipment you are giving of your substance to feed the poor.

II. COMMENT

I have made a comparative study of the equipment and service of the Tacoma Public Library with the same

features of 15 other public libraries of about the same size and conditions well distributed over the United States and find two fundamental difficulties, each to a degree exp[illegible]ing and reinforcing the other.

1. That the proportion of the entire expenditure which is given to staff salaries averages 46 per cent in the libraries, but that you are using 58 per cent of your entire expenditure for this purpose.

This might happen: a. Because of exorbitant salaries; b. Because of a larger staff than is necessary to render the service your library is living; c. Because you are rendering a greater service than is consistent with your income and your equipment. Let us examine these separately and in detail.

A. Your individual salaries are not too high in a single instance. Your librarian and heads of departments, each requiring good scholastic education, college graduation or its equivalent, plus professional training of one or two years, should be upon a salary basis equal to the principals and department heads of your high schools. If you will examine the salary lists in both cases you will find the advantage much in favor of the high school teachers. Your assistants should rank in salary with grade teachers. They do not so rank.

Many of your assistants are paid scarcely living salaries if we can assume they are wholly dependent upon their income and we have no right to assume otherwise. It is not within the province of any public institution to exact or to accept service for [illegible] than fair compensation because [illegible] employe happens to live "[illegible] within the city of employ[illegible] some of your employes are [illegible] more than they are receiving [illegible] not the quality of persons [illegible] economically employed in a [illegible] Statistics of other libraries upon [illegible] point are lacking or so indefinite [illegible] they can be used with but little [illegible] Comparison with schools is fair, I [illegible] sure.

Exorbitant salaries, then, do not explain the fact of too large a per cent being given to salaries.

B. Is it true that the staff is larger than is necessary to render the service that is given? Upon a statistical study of your service as indicated by the circulation, which is the most significant single item in the [illegible] of a public library, I am convinced that your staff is not undeserving. On the contrary, I find that your circulation per staff member is equal to the best and better than the average. An additional evidence upon this point is the fact that you are circulating your books at a per volume circulation cost much lower than the average, ranging from one-half to two-thirds the cost found in other similar libraries.

Your staff, therefore, is not too large for the direct service you are rendering your patrons. We cannot account for the excessive salary total on the grounds proposed in A or B.

C. Are you rendering a greater immediate service to your patrons than is consistent with your income and equipment?

It has been shown that you are rendering greater service than the average. Your city is appropriating less per capita of your population than is done in other similar cities. With these two facts in mind, it is clear that you must be sacrificing somewhere to accomplish the immediate service.

Looking further into your distribution of expenditure, I find that you are exhausting the most essential equipment of your library, that is, your supply of books. Your library is feeding upon its own vitals, which, if continued, means death.

2. Your expenditure for books, periodicals and bindings, taken as a unit, is now below what it has been, and it is much below what is being expended by other similar libraries. The average of expenditure in the several libraries studied is approximately 25 per cent of the entire expenditure, while in your library it is only 17 per cent of your expenditure. Eight per cent additional of your entire outlay should have gone into these items. This means that your equipment must be deteriorating, rather rapidly. An additional evidence in this same line is the fact set forth in the reports of the department heads recently rendered to your librarian. These reports almost uniformly state that the book stock is being depleted by discarding worn-out volumes and by withdrawing many volumes in need of rebinding. Of course, no institution can live and thrive unless it keeps its growth of equipment at least a little in advance of its service exhaustion.

Here, then, under C, may be explained both facts that must be remedied. Your salary total is too large relatively becausein your desire for excellent immediate service to the patrons you have increased your staff numbers and your total staff salaries out of proportion to your income and a corresponding cut had to be made somewhere, since your appropriation is a fixed sum, and you have made it in your essential equipment — books, periodicals and binding, considered as one unit.

Combining C under 1 and 2, my conclusion is that you are rendering a greater immediate service to your patrons than is consistent with your income or your equipment for 1916, and still more out of proportion to what is appropriated for 1917.

In short, you are rendering a greater service to a hungry public, whose appetite your skill and devotion have whetted, than the public is willing to vote funds to supply. You are exhausting the library by overdraft upon its ability to serve.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the light of these facts and in harmony with the opinions already foreshadowed, the only alternative apparent to me is to decrease your salary item by decreasing the number of the staff and discontinuing all agencies except the main library and possibly such stations as can be conducted with very little or no cost. And I would recommend alternative 1 or 3 as set forth by your librarian in the series of six.

2. In decreasing the number of persons in your staff and reorganizing what your financial resources will justify you in retaining, I would recommend that you select for retention those whose general education, professional preparation and valuable experience best fits them for intelligent and growing service to the public in a library capacity, and their number must be determined by the proportion of your funds you can devote to salaries apportioned in reasonable salaries measured by your best equipped persons, not by the work that you would like to do for your people nor by their needs. I am sure this recommendation, if followed, will ultimately give your citizens the best service that your money can secure for them. I hesitate to make any recommendation that will make necessary the removal of any person from a position, but, considering the ultimate good of the institution which means the good of all your citizens, I can see no alternative, and certainly no individual interest must stand against the interest of all.

3. I would recommend that you make reasonable increases in the salaries of those whom you retain approximately as you estimated in your proposed 1917 budget, or better. Let your people understand that a library staff is not merely a group of workers, but that most of them are important guides, directors, advisers in the educational work of your city in phases of education in many ways more important than the work done by the teachers in the schools.

Young girls with little scholastic education, little or no professional training and no background of culture from reading or travel, are of little use in a library. In fact, they cannot be economically used, except in a few instances where merely clerical service is demanded, and that type of service is not large in a library of the size now being considered, but grows more rapidly in larger libraries.

4. As to the internal organization of the staff, when the number and personnel of the revised staff is fixed upon, I can make no recommendation. The judgment of the librarian and the heads of departments must determine that in the light of such experimenting as may be necessary with persons you select and the work which must be performed. This adjustment will be guided in part by seasons, in part by emergencies, and in part by many tested judgments. The administrative members of the staff alone can make these adjustments.

5. I would further recommend that you begin at once with the new year devoting a reasonable portion of your funds to bringing up your rebinding, to doing what binding of periodicals is needed, and to replenishing your book supply. In the coming year you should not only expend in the normal proportions in these lines, but you must expend in advance of the normal what will replace the exhausted stock. When larger funds come to you, as they doubtless will, you will find little or no trouble making up a good staff in a few weeks or months, but to build up a book collection requires much time and continued care.

6. As a suggestive guide for the apportionment of funds which, by the way, can not be absolutely followed, I would suggest the following:

1. For salaries, from 45 per cent to 50 per cent of your available funds.

2. For books, periodicals, binding and rebinding, from 20 per cent to 2 per cent of your entire available funds, giving binding and rebinding the right of way, and to book purchases what may then be available.

Respectfully submitted,
(Signed) W. E. HENRY.

November 21, 1916.

Though the report advocates plan 1 or 3, the board adopted plan 4, involving practically the same expenditure, feeling that it should accept Mr. H. A. Rhodes' offer of paying $1000 for the maintenance of the library station in his store, which he did with the understanding that it would not be regarded as a precedent, but merely as an emergency measure for the year 1917. This station circulates annually some 42,000 volumes of the 421,000 circulated throughout the entire library system.

The plan adopted applies all the principles of retrenchment which were recommended to the board. The salary roll is reduced 9% and the equipment expense increased 4%. Another year, if a reasonable appropriation is made, almost a complete adjustment to the percentages suggested should be possible.

The board has under way a number of plans for economy in the operation of the library aside from retrenchment, some of which are already in practice as a result of the self-analysis made by the library staff.

The retrenchment plans decided on already include the elimination during 1917 of extra circulating copies of cereain periodicals and of a few unindexed magazines from the reference department subscription list. Also, January 1, 1917, fines on overdue books drawn on adult cards will be raised from one cent per day to two cents per day, as is the practice in most public libraries.

Let it be said in conclusion that no one can regret more than does the library board the necessity for closing [illegible] branch [illegible] shing the service we are rendering [illegible] people of Tacoma. It is a [illegible] a step backward. It would seem, however, from Professor Henry's report that it is only possible to keep our good service by increasing the ads for library purposes.

T. REV. FREDERIC W. KEATOR.

Crippling the Library

e action of the library board in curtailing the service in this city and closing outlying branches have been expected. The board's hands were the action of the city council in cutting their ation several months ago. Whatever protests om the inconvenience that outlying districts suffer should be directed to Mayor Fawcett and the members of the council. The slash in budget appropriations was responsible.

Professor Henry of the University of Washington, an expert of note, declares that the Tacoma library and its branches have been rendering more service to the people for less money than any similar library in the country. It is a matter of civic regret that the good work which the library has been doing is checked.

When the next budget is up for consideration the sentiment of the citizens of Tacoma ought to be so strongly expressed to the council that the work of the library will be forwarded and not crippled.

T mayor seems to have changed his mind about it. Some days ago sked "Of what use is a city library anyway?" Now he seem d in favor of keeping library branches open in South Tacoma and McKinley Hill. If the mayor were helpful instead of antogonistically critical there are many phases of Tacoma public life that would be ever so much more valuable.

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